


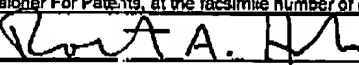
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0001/PTO Rev. 10/95		U.S. Department of Commerce Patent and Trademark Office		Application Number	09/782,616		
TRANSMITTAL FORM <i>(to be used for all correspondence during pendency of filed application)</i>				Filing Date	February 12, 2001		
				First Named Inventor	Mark C. Pace		
				Group Art Unit Number	3713		
				Examiner Name	Scott E. Jones		
Total Number of Pages in This Submission		6	Attorney Docket Number		19538-05563		

ENCLOSURES (check all that apply)	
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Signature:			
Attorney/Reg. No.:	Robert A. Hulse. No. 48,473	Dated:	May 6, 2005

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19538/05563/SF/5142744.1

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APPLICANT: Mark C. Pace & Thomas W. Cook
APPLICATION NO.: 09/782,616
FILING DATE: February 12, 2001
TITLE: AUTOMATED SERVICE SCHEDULING SYSTEM
CONFIRMATION NO: 9755
EXAMINER: Scott E. Jones
GROUP ART UNIT: 3713
ATTY. DKT. NO.: 19538-05563

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Dated: May 6, 2005

By:


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RESPONSE E

Sir:

This is made in response to the Office Action mailed February 7, 2005. Claims 1, 3-9, 16, 18, 19, 23, 25-31, 38, 40, 41, 45-54, 61, 63, 64, 68, 69, 71, 78, 80, 81, 91, 93, 94, 98, 105, 107, and 108 were presented for examination and pending in this application. On the basis of the following remarks, consideration of this application and allowance of all pending claims are requested.

In the latest Office Action, claims 78, 80, 81, 91, 93, 94, 98, 105, 107, and 108 were rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,070,142 to McDonough et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The claimed invention is directed at automating the servicing of customers at service locations. For example, claim 78 recites a system that selects a primary service attendant to provide service for a customer at a service location. The system then communicates a message to the selected primary service attendant, where "the message indicat[es] the service location at which the event is to be serviced." The selected service attendant receives this message, for example using a message receiver, after which the service attendant knows what event needs to be serviced where in the business establishment. This allows the selected service attendant (who may be anywhere in the business establishment) to go to the patron and provide customer service to the patron *at the service location* identified in the message. In this way, as events occur in various service locations throughout a business establishment, service attendants can be efficiently dispatched according to a set of business rules to deal with the customers' needs as they arise.

The claimed invention thus improves the customer service experience over conventional service approaches. For example, in a casino environment, the claimed invention enables a system that would more efficiently service a customer who wins a jackpot at a slot machine. Presently, when a patron wins a jackpot, the associated slot machine produces visual and/or audible cues to indicate that the customer needs service — in this case, that the jackpot be paid out to the customer. Given the amount of activity on a casino floor, this method of identifying customers in need of service can be unreliable, haphazard, slow, and unsatisfactory to the customers, who may sit for many minutes waiting for a service attendant while unable to

continue playing. It can be appreciated that similar problems exist for providing service to patrons in other environments, where the servicing is to be provided at various locations distributed throughout the business establishment. The claimed invention improves the customer service experience by selecting a service attendant to service the event and then communicating to the selected service attendant a message that indicates at which service location in the business establishment the service is to be provided.

In contrast, McDonough merely describes a virtual call center. Whereas the claimed invention provides services to customers at locations distributed throughout a business establishment, McDonough simply answers customers' phone calls from a remote call center. McDonough's customer service thus exists in a virtual environment, where services are not tied to the particular locations where the services are to be provided. Rather, the services provided in McDonough are provided via phone calls with customers who can be at any arbitrary location. This is a key distinction, as McDonough's services attendants do not need to be dispatched to provide service to customers at various service locations. Therefore, McDonough does not face the problem of providing services to locations distributed throughout a business establishment.

Because of this difference, McDonough does not send "message[s] indicating the service location at which the event is to be serviced," as claimed. In McDonough's virtual system, in fact, such information would be irrelevant. McDonough's employees do not need to know from where their customers are calling, and even if they did know they would not have to service the customer at that location. Indeed, tying service to the customer's location would contradict a fundamental purpose of McDonough's *virtual* call center. As explained in the Abstract, McDonough provides service via "a customer access resource through *any* access method at *any* time from *any* customer location." Therefore, McDonough's system does not send the claimed

messages to service providers that indicate where the service is to be provided, as the customers may be anywhere.

As the examiner noted, McDonough does mention that a customer may optionally contact the call center through additional remote communication means (such as a fax server, a web server, an e-mail server, a PC direct server, or a kiosk). But regardless of the contact method, McDonough's system still merely routes the customer's call to a remote employee. The locations that the Office Action cites in McDonough are not service locations at which the events are to be serviced. The call center employees interact with customers over the phone lines; they do not go to the service location. Therefore, McDonough does not disclose anywhere the claimed messages indicating the service location at which the event is to be serviced, and in any event such a feature would be impossible for a call center.

Claims 78, 80, 81, 91, 93, 94, 98, 105, 107, and 108 are therefore novel over McDonough because they recite limitations not disclosed either expressly or inherently in that reference.

Claims 1, 3-9, 16, 18, 19, 23, 25-31, 38, 40, 41, 45-54, 61, 63, 64, 68, 69, and 71 were rejected as made obvious by McDonough in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,003,013 to Boushy et al. Each of these claims rejected as obvious include the distinguishing features that make claims 78, 80, 81, 91, 93, 94, 98, 105, 107, and 108 novel over McDonough alone. In the Office Action, McDonough was applied to claims 1, 3-9, 16, 18, 19, 23, 25-31, 38, 40, 41, 45-54, 61, 63, 64, 68, 69, and 71 in the same way that it was applied to claims 78, 80, 81, 91, 93, 94, 98, 105, 107, and 108, and then Boushy was further cited for its disclosure of additional limitations, such as the gaming and slot machines and gaming machine management system. Importantly, the addition of Boushy to McDonough does not cure the primary deficiencies in McDonough discussed

above. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-9, 16, 18, 19, 23, 25-31, 38, 40, 41, 45-54, 61, 63, 64, 68, 69, and 71 are patentable over the suggested combination of McDonough and Boushy.

A provisional nonstatutory double patenting rejection was also made based on related U.S. Application No. 09/782,677. Because the provisional double patenting rejection is the only remaining rejection, that rejection should be withdrawn and the application advanced to allowance. See MPEP 804. If deemed appropriate, a double patenting rejection can be made in the related application.

It is believed that the application is in condition for allowance of all claims, and therefore an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that for any reason direct contact with Applicants' representative would help advance the prosecution of this case to allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

MARK C. PACE & THOMAS W. COOK

Dated: May 6, 2005

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